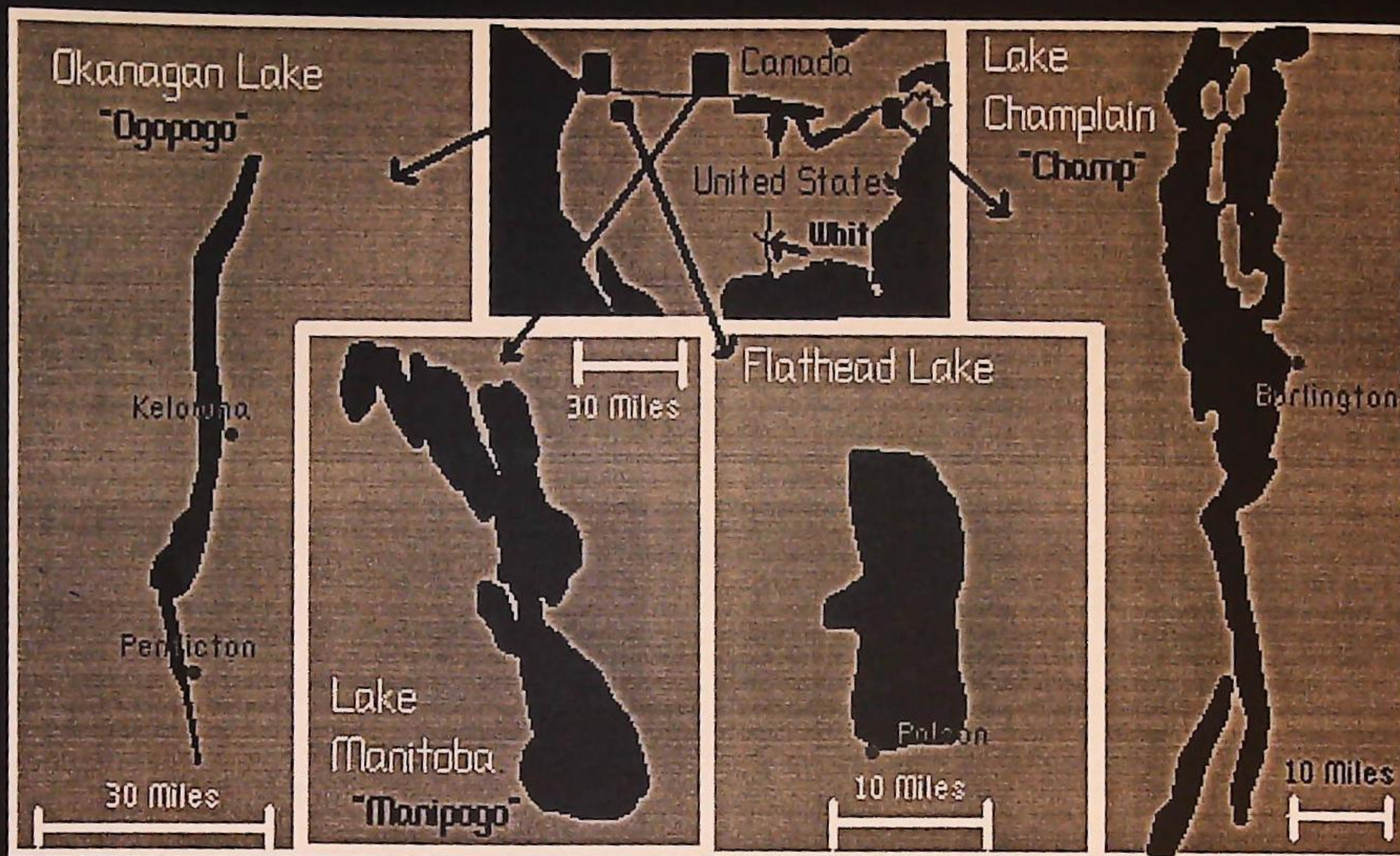
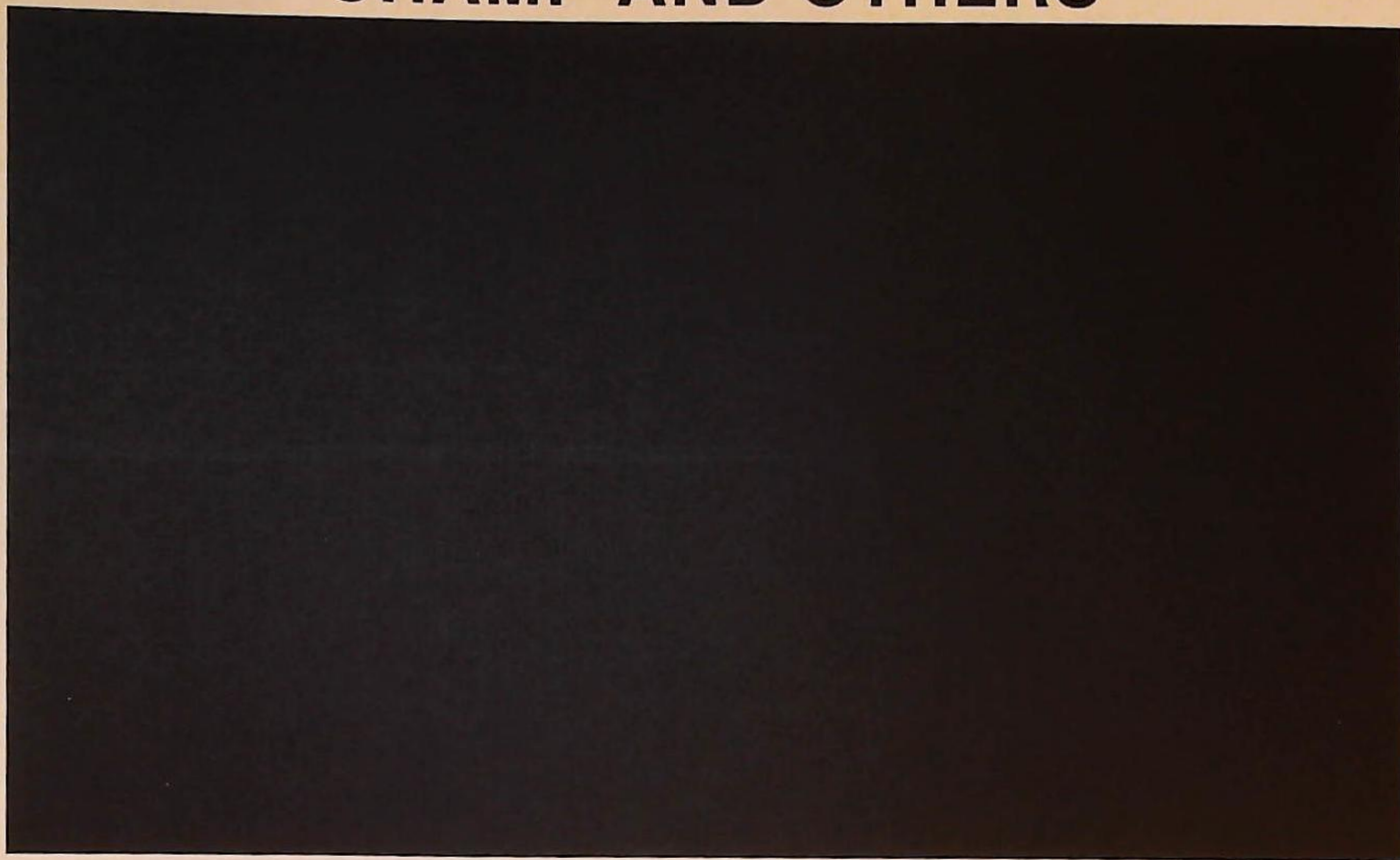




North America: **CHAMP AND OTHERS**



Reports about monsters is coming from more then 90 North-American lakes and waters.

CHAMP

One of the first observations was given by the Canadian explorer Sam de Champlain, who in 1609 discovered the large lake in Vermont which now is named after him. What he had seen at todays Champlain was an unknown animal, 11-12 meters long and about 30 cm in diameter, dark to mahogney in colour, almost black and looking like a giant snake.

At the end of the 1800's the interest for Champ, as the monster know is called, was so large that the Circus director P.T. Barnum offered a fortune to anyone who could capture it alive. No one claimed the reward but in the summer of 1977 Sandra Mansini saw the head and neck of a strange creature rise out of the water at Lake Champlain.

She took a classic picture of Champ - the one that portray the animal a plesiosaurus from a prehistoric age. Experts has said that the pict

is genuine, but when Mansini's negative vanished before it could be examined, the sceptics believe it's a clever forgery.

Up to 1992 there were 180 witness accounts of Champ and of these 83 mentions a long neck with a small head, which is the common description for lake monster throughout the entire world. No animal known to science fits such a description, but the prehistoric plesiosaurus does.

PONIK

Reports of a strange animal in Lake Pohenegamook at Quebec began to pour in 1804. In the summer of 1957 an expedition was launched by Dr Vadin Vladikov, in charge of Quebec's National Environmental Protection Agency. Soon they were on the lookout for Ponik, or the Pohenegamook's sea-cow, as the zoologist's called the animal (at the time not knowing that sea-cows never can be found in inland lakes).

According to witness testimony's Ponik was between 3,5-5,5 meters long, brown or black in colour with a roundish back and a 60-cm wide and serrated fin along its body. As soon as someone got close to the animal, which liked to bask at the surface and frolick in the sun, it glided off and sank into the depth.

In the Mid-70's another expedition was arranged by The Society for Investigations of the Unexplained. For ten days three frogmen equipped with sonar searched for Ponik. At one occasion they registered a 7,5 meters long object moving under their own boat. They also managed to take an underwater movie of a long, dark shape that no one could identify.

IGOPOGO

At Simcoe Lake close to Ontario several expeditions have searched for crocodile-looking creature that goes under the name of Igopogo. In the Autumn of 1963, Igopogo was seen by a minister and an undertaker and his family. The animal was described as black in colour, 9-11 meters long and had a powerful, serrated tailfin.

THE SILVER LAKE MONSTER

"Boys, that thing is moving!". Those excited words launched one of the

most celebrated lake monster events of 1855, although it has now been long forgotten.

At 9 p.m. on the evening of July 13, 1855, four men and two boys were in a boat fishing on Silver Lake in the northwestern part of New York State. It was shortly after dusk and the stars illuminated the waters. Suddenly, off the stern of the boat, a long object appeared. At first it looked like a log eighty or one hundred feet long and the group did not pay much attention to it until it disappeared abruptly and reappeared moments later in another position.

"Its head - it could no longer be called a log - was now within three rods of the boat", The Wyoming County Times reported on July 18, 1855. "As it approached, the waves parted on either side as if a boat were leisurely approaching".

The fishermen were somewhat dismayed and Alonzo Scribner wasted no time in trying to cut the anchor rope. But he dropped his knife into the water and had to haul the anchor up by hand while his comrades put their backs to their oars. The thing bobbed beneath the waves again, and again reappeared behind their stern. "All in the boat had a fair view of the creature", the Times story continued. "And concur in representing as a most horrid and repulsive looking monster. The party reached shore in safety, but frightened most out of their senses".

Between 1885-86 the monster of Silver Lake was seen by hundreds of people. An Indian named John-John came forward and said, that tribes in the past that had camped by the lake had seen and been frightened by a monster lizard.

FLATHEAD

The most authentic of the American lake monsters may be living at the bottom of Flathead Lake, near Polson, Montana. Whatever it is, it has been seen by a great many people over a long stretch of time.

Back in the 1920s, fishermen on Flathead Lake complained that some giant unidentified swimming object was tearing their nets to shreds even nets designed to withstand forty-pound bull trout.

In September 1960, Mr. Gilbert Zigler heard waves crashing against the shore and saw water splashing high over the end of the pier. Moving up for a closer look, Zigler and his wife were amazed to see a huge black something rubbing up against the pier, like an animal scratching its

back!

"It was a horrible looking thing", Zigler recalled. "It had the head about the size of a horse.. and about a foot of neck showing". He ran back to his house for his rifle but by the time he returned the creature was swimming out of range.

SLIMY SLIM

Then there is Payette Lake in Idaho. The creature is called Slimy Slim and has created as much sensation in the USA as Nessie has in Scotland.

In the summer of 1931 John McKay saw an animal with large humps and a lizard-like head. A couple of months later a periscope-looking neck was seen, on top of it was a small head. Shortly thereafter a known business man said he had seen a snub-nosed crocodile in the lake, at least 15 meters long.

CHESSIE

In 1982, the Enigma Project became inextricably involved in investigating and documenting reports of a Chesapeake Bay Phenomenon. For nearly twenty years, newspapers of Maryland and Virginia have been documenting reports of a huge, snake-like animal allegedly seen in the Chesapeake Bay and its larger tributaries.

The mysterious beast, nicknamed "Chessie" by the press, has been repeatedly described as serpentine, about twenty-five to forty feet in length, eight to ten inches in diameter, and possessing an elliptical, football-shaped head. Reportedly, the creature is a uniformly dark color, having no fins or bodily appendages.

Although the Project has secured interviews with retired watermen who recalled talk of "giant snakes" seen many years ago in southern Maryland's swamps, Chessie's notoriety really surfaced as recently as 1978 when Virginia newspapers began printing contemporary sightings of the beast.

For several years reported sightings of the alleged animal remained unsubstantiated until May 31, 1982. On that date around 7:30 PM, Maryland resident Robert Frew videotaped a long, dark, serpent-like creature swimming in the Chesapeake Bay, about 100 feet off the bulkhead of his Kent Island home. The less-than 2 minutes of video recording that Frew shot proved to be very interesting and quickly ca

to the attention of the Enigma Project researchers who launched an investigation of it.

On August 20, 1982, The Enigma Project succeeded in getting the Frew videotape an audience with Dr. George Zug and other scientists at the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of Natural History. After thorough examining the tape the scientists, although intrigued by what it apparently depicted, were unable to reach any conclusions about the "animate" object shown. The videotape's quality was simply not good enough to allow such a determination.

As a result of the publicity concerning the Smithsonian's viewing, Enigma Project directors were contacted, the following September, by scientists at the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory in Laurel Maryland. Researchers at the Applied Physics Laboratory offered to perform computer image enhancement of the Frew Tape in an effort to extract from it more information about the mystery animal.

The computer work initially conducted isolated an impressive, unmistakable, serpentine shape from the surrounding waters. Unfortunately, soon after the enhancement techniques began, the internal funding that the Applied Physics Laboratory allowed for the Frew videotape work ran out. Further enhancements on the Frew tape have been suspended pending the availability of some outside source funding. Since 1983 the videotape has remained in limbo.

Presently, no one knows what Chessie is. Nevertheless, compelling detailed reports from credible, reliable witnesses suggest the possibility of an unknown animal. Although the number of Chessie reports vary from year to year, they persist all the same.

TAHOE TESSIE

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These sightings of "Tahoe Tessie," as she is called (after Loch Ness's "Nessie") have caused quite a stir. On the one hand, those who have seen Tessie naturally believe in her existence, and a Tahoe Tessie Museum

and phone hotline for sightings have been established in Kings Beach the north shore of the lake. On the other hand, some skeptics claim that Tessie eyewitnesses are mistaking logs or waves for sea monsters. Washoe Indian legends speak of monsters inhabiting the lake; local author John Roush argues that Tessie is really just a rogue giant sturgeon.

And so the debate continues. Perhaps someday Lake Tahoe will be graced with a visit by the International Society of Cryptozoology, an organization that investigates such matters, and some progress will be made in solving the mystery. Then again, scientists with the U.C. Davis Tahoe Research Group under Professor Charles Goldman came to the lake in 1984 to investigate Tessie, but their study was inconclusive.





